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For Immediate Release

ARB CONVENES INDEPENDENT PANEL TO EVALUATE BATTERY TECHNOLOGY

The California Air Resources Board (ARB) has convened an independent panel of experts to conduct a scientific evaluation of battery technology needed to produce commercially viable zero emission vehicles for California motorists.

During the next 30 days, the panel will meet with battery and vehicle manufacturers and report their findings at ARB's October 11 staff workshop on battery technology.

"California must have zero emission vehicles to meet federal air quality standards by 2010 and beyond. This audit of battery technology will provide an unbiased assessment of key zero emission vehicle technology for both the short and medium term," ARB Chairman John D. Dunlap said.

The four panelists are: Dr. Fritz Kalhammer, vice president at the Electric Power Research Institute in Palo Alto; Dr. Akiya Kozawa, a retired research associate for Union Carbide Corp.; Dr. Carl Moyer, chief scientist for Acurex Environmental Corporation in Mountain View; and Dr. Boone Owens, an electrochemical technology specialist for Research International in North Carolina and an adjunct professor in chemical engineering and materials science at the University of Minnesota.

The panelists are expected to travel extensively to meet with battery and vehicle manufacturers to determine the performance characteristics of specific battery technologies and when they could be available in mass-produced electric vehicles. The panelists also will assess the time necessary to evaluate batteries in prototype vehicles and to achieve needed production volumes.

The panel will focus on battery technologies expected to be commercially available between 1998 and 2002. These technologies include conventional lead- acid batteries and advanced batteries, including nickel metal hydride and lithium ion.

"The ARB looks forward to a comprehensive report on this critical issue. We are counting on all battery and auto manufacturers to fully cooperate with this scientific inquiry," Dunlap said. "Working together in good faith will result in the best program that will improve air quality for generations to come."